

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment with Remarks along with a Request for Continued Examination. The pending Office Action addresses and rejects claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 12, 14-16, 18, 20-22, and 26. Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 2 and 17.

Amendments to the Claims

Independent claim 1 is amended to clarify that the mating component is configured to extend into the cavity in a direction transverse to the longitudinal axis. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification and in the drawings, for example in FIG. 3 and at paragraph 0028 of the published application.

Withdrawn claim 5 is canceled. Applicants reserve the right to pursue this claim in a divisional application.

Independent claim 16 is amended to clarify that the locking mechanism engages at least two outer surfaces on opposed sides of the longitudinal axis of the receiving component. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification and in the drawings, for example at paragraph 0026 of the published application.

Independent claim 22 is amended to clarify that the receiving component has a longitudinal axis, and that the locking mechanism is slideably moveable along the longitudinal axis. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification and in the drawings, for example at paragraph 0028 of the published application.

Independent claim 26 is amended to clarify that the spring biases the locking mechanism along the longitudinal axis. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification and in the drawings, for example at paragraph 0027 of the published application.

No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 12, 14-16, 18, 20-22, and 26 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,551,316 of Rinner et al. (“Rinner”). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s rejection.

Claim 1

As noted above, claim 1 is amended to recite that the mating component is configured to extend into the cavity defined by the receiving component in a direction *transverse* to the longitudinal axis of the receiving component. Rinner does not teach or even suggest such a configuration. To the contrary, as shown in Figure 13 of Rinner, the mating component (71) extends into the cavity (69) in a direction *parallel* to the longitudinal axis of the receiving component (68), not in a direction *transverse* to the longitudinal axis of the receiving component.

Claim 16

As noted above, claim 16 is amended to recite that locking mechanism engages at least two outer surfaces on *opposed sides* of the longitudinal axis of the receiving component. Rinner fails to teach or even suggest such an orientation. As shown in Figure 13 of Rinner, the locking mechanism (76 and 77) engages hole (74). The Examiner argues that “the opposite sides of the locking mechanism provide the two outer surfaces. The edge of the hole (74) where the locking member engages is considered to have outer surfaces.” However, the surfaces engaged by the locking mechanism (76 and 77) are located on only one side of the longitudinal axis of the receiving component, not on *opposed sides* of the longitudinal axis.

Claim 22

As noted above, claim 22 is amended to recite that the locking mechanism is slideably moveable along the longitudinal axis of the receiving component. Rinner does not teach or even suggest a locking mechanism that is moveable along a longitudinal axis of the receiving component.

As shown in Figure 13 of Rinner, the locking mechanism consists of a spring (77) and a pin (76). When the locking mechanism is activated, the pin (76) extends into a hole (74) in the receiving component (68). Thus, the locking mechanism (76 and 77) is only moveable perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the receiving component, and not moveable *along the longitudinal axis* of the receiving component (68).

Claim 26

As noted above, claim 22 is amended to recite that the locking mechanism is biased along the longitudinal axis of the receiving component by a spring. Rinner does not teach or even suggest such an arrangement. To the contrary, as shown in Figure 13 of Rinner, the spring (77) biases the pin (76) *perpendicular* to the longitudinal axis of the receiving component (68), not along the longitudinal axis of the receiving component.

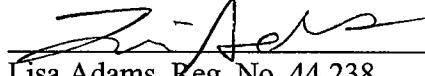
Accordingly, independent claims 1, 16, 22 and 26 distinguish over Rinner and represent allowable subject matter. Claims 2-4, 6-9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 are allowable at least because they depend from an allowable base claim.

Conclusion

Accordingly, all claims are now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicants if such communication is deemed to expedite prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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